

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, MAY 8, 2006

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:16 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Senhauser, Sullebarger, Spraul-Schmidt, Chatterjee and Raser present. Absent: Bloomfield, Kirk, Kreider and Wallace.

MINUTES

The Historic Conservation Board unanimously approved the minutes of April 24, 2006 meeting (motion by Raser, second by Spraul-Schmidt).

CERTIFICATION OF APPROPRIATENESS, 1410 MAIN STREET – CRAWFORD LOFTS, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Mr. Forwood informed the Historic Conservation Board (Board) that staff had received notification, after the Board packets had been mailed, that the Cincinnati Preservation Association (CPA) holds an easement on the exterior of the Crawford Lofts at 1410 Main Street. CPA and the condominium association have expressed concern about the work. The Board agreed that its determination would address whether or not the windows conformed to conservation guidelines. Any other issues would need to be addressed separately by the appropriate entities.

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report on an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for six new vinyl windows in Unit 2A. She stated that the windows were installed on the Main Street façade of the condominium without a building permit or a Certificate of Appropriateness, and apparently in contradiction to the building association's bylaws.

On July 29, 2002, the Board approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation of the building by developer Chris Frutkin, which preserved the wood windows on the Main Street (west) façade and north elevation. Mr. Frutkin indicated at that time that the wood two-over-two windows on these elevations were installed around 1999. It approved the installation of vinyl replacement windows on the rear (east) elevation as part of the total rehabilitation finding that the secondary elevation was not highly visible from the public right-of-way and that the fabrication of new wood windows was cost prohibitive on this minor facade.

Since that time staff approved two applications to install new Pella clad windows (to match the c. 1999 wood windows) on the Main Street façade. A third unit owner installed Pella replacements without a building permit. The Crawford Lofts now has three different types of windows on the main (west) façade, and this lack of a uniform appearance is of concern to staff.

The Over-the-Rhine Historic District Conservation Guidelines state that original windows should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. If replacement is necessary, the new windows should match the original in material, size and style as closely as possible. Staff stated that the Pella replacements meet this guideline but the vinyl did not. Staff recommended approval of the Pella windows as installed but denial of the vinyl units installed by the applicant.

According to the applicant, Lily Mulberry, the six wood windows in her unit were in poor condition and could not be repaired. The windows did not dampen street noise and leaked air, resulting in high energy bills. Ms. Mulberry indicated to staff that she considered several manufacturers before selecting the Earthwise Cambridge sash. The windows cost approximately \$2,500 including installation; Pella would have cost more than double that amount.

Ms. Mulberry stated that she would be willing to paint her windows and add an exterior grid to present a uniform appearance on the west façade. Upon response to Mr. Raser and Mr. Senhauser, she said she not confirmed with the manufacturer that the window would function with these modifications. Ms. Mulberry also suggested that limiting replacement windows to Pella places a financial burden on property owners and asked that the Board approve appropriate windows manufactured by other companies.

Mary Mosby, owner of Unit 2E, confirmed that the windows in the building are in very poor condition and would likely need to be replaced in all units.

Kendall Fisher, Executive Director of CPA, stated that the organization is against the installation of vinyl replacement windows. It has not yet determined whether the Pellas would be acceptable.

Mr. Raser suggested that the condominium owners work with the homeowners association to purchase windows as a group to procure a lower price. Ms. Spraul-Schmidt suggested the association ensure the owners are aware the building is in a historic district and exterior work is subject to review.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Raser, second by Spraul-Schmidt) to take the following actions:

1. Deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for the Earthwise Cambridge windows as installed.
2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of two-over-two Pella aluminum clad windows (or equal) as presently installed in other units.
3. Instruct staff to inform condominium owners in the Crawford Lofts and the building association of the necessity of receiving a building permit and a Certificate of Appropriateness for all exterior work.
4. Encourage the Crawford Lofts Association to select two-over-two Pella aluminum clad windows (or equal, as presently installed in other units) as the appropriate replacement sash for the building and to inform present and future owners of this specification.

Note: Ms. Sullebarger departed at 3:42 PM. A quorum was not needed for the remaining preliminary design reviews.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 518, 520 AND 526 READING ROAD, OVER-THE – RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented a report on the preliminary design review for 518, 520 and 526 Reading Road in the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. She stated that the Board first reviewed this project at its meeting on April 10, 2006. At this meeting the Board confirmed that the buildings at 518 and 520 Reading Road contributed to the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. Since April 10, 2006, the applicant modified the design based his understanding of the Board's comments. Mr. Bley is seeking further input from the Board before closing on the properties and/or finalizing the project design.

Ms. Cowden briefly reviewed the staff concerns regarding this design in relation to the conservation guidelines. She also noted the project had not been reviewed by the zoning examiner and might require Zoning Variances.

Terry Daspit, architect, presented the project and highlighted changes that were made to the design after receiving the Board's suggestions at the April 10, 2006 meeting. In response to Mr. Raser's questions, Mr. Daspit stated it would be acceptable to forgo painting of the brick for 518 Reading Road. The new curtain wall proposed for 520 Reading Road would be clear and the structural

concrete visible. New limestone and brick would wrap around to the side elevation. The elevator tower exterior would be painted CMU.

Mr. Senhauser reviewed comments and suggestions from the April 10, 2006 meeting and pertinent portions of the conservation guidelines. He stated that he is not convinced that the glazing system proposed is the best choice. He suggested that adding more openings on the east elevation of 520 Reading Road would provide increased natural light to the condominium units and reduce the need to modify the reading Road openings. He stated that the two, small, flanking second floor windows are significant to the overall design and should not be enlarged.

The Board suggested that the vertical nature of the building should be maintained through the structure and be unified from base to cap as they do on 518 Reading. The central portion of the upper floors of 520 that presently reads as a smooth, glazed void should better relate to the smaller, individual windows on the first floor.

Mr. Raser stated that the current design was a great improvement over the design presented at the April 10, 2006 meeting.

BOARD ACTION

Because this was a preliminary design review, no action was required by the Board.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 817 ELM STREET, 819-823 ELM STREET, AND 205 W. 9th STREET, NINTH STREET HISTORIC DISTICT

Ms. Cowden stated that Towne Properties has an option to purchase 817 Elm Street, 819-823 Elm Street and 205 W. 9th Street in the Ninth Street Historic District. Towne Properties was proposing to demolish three contributing buildings and construct a new multi-family residence. The new building will be four-stories tall and contain 15 residential condominiums over ground floor parking.

Ms. Cowden stated the Board first reviewed this project at its meeting on April 24, 2006. The applicant did not attend the meeting; nonetheless, the Board discussed the proposal and directed staff to forward its comments to the applicant.

The Board agreed at the April 24, 2006 meeting that additional detailed information on a range of uses and treatments would be necessary to fully evaluate the application and design. Ms. Cowden stated that a second proforma has been provided by the applicant to supplement the information provided for the first preliminary design review. She also provided new correspondence from a nearby property owner and CPA.

Arn Bortz, Towne Properties, briefly described the design of the proposed new construction. He stated that the building would be contemporary and compliment the historic district. Mr. Bortz stated that new construction is the only viable option for the site. Although he had provided information on the cost of rehabilitating the existing buildings as residences, their severe deterioration and high cost precluded restoration. Mr. Bortz said he had not generated a proforma for reuse as offices, since there is no office market in that part of the city.

Mr. Forwood indicated that Mr. Bortz must make a decision on the purchase option for this property by May 31, 2006, so will return at the next meeting on May 22, 2006 with the same documentation seeking formal approval to demolish the three buildings. Mr. Senhauser stated that the pictures included in the packet do not support all of the information contained in the letter from the structural engineer, Shayne Manning. Mr. Raser said he would still like to see costs/studies on renovating the existing buildings for a non-residential use.

Margo Warminski, Preservation Director of CPA, stated that she does not support demolition of these contributing buildings and believed approval of the proposal would set a dangerous precedent for this and other historic districts.

BOARD ACTION

Because this was a preliminary design review, no action was required by the Board.

ADJOURN

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date: _____